

Assembly Bill No. 369

CHAPTER 160

An act to amend Sections 11105.04 and 11170 of the Penal Code, relating to child abuse.

[Approved by Governor July 30, 2007. Filed with
Secretary of State July 30, 2007.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 369, Solorio. Child abuse reporting.

Existing law requires the Department of Justice to maintain an index of all reports of child abuse and severe neglect submitted by agencies mandated to make those reports. Existing law requires the Department of Justice to make relevant information contained in the index available to specified law enforcement agencies, county welfare departments, and other agencies that are conducting a child abuse investigation.

This bill would require the Department of Justice to make available to a Court Appointed Special Advocate program that is conducting a background investigation of an applicant seeking employment with the program or a volunteer position as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, information contained in the index regarding known or suspected child abuse by the applicant.

Existing law authorizes a designated Court Appointed Special Advocate program to submit to the Department of Justice fingerprint images and related information of employment and volunteer candidates for the purpose of obtaining information as to the existence and nature of any record of state- or federal-level convictions or state- or federal-level arrests, as specified.

This bill would revise that provision to also authorize a designated Court Appointed Special Advocate program to submit to the Department of Justice fingerprint images and related information of employment and volunteer candidates for the purpose of obtaining information as to the existence and nature of child abuse investigations contained in the Child Abuse Central Index.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 11105.04 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

11105.04. (a) A designated Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program may submit to the Department of Justice fingerprint images and related information of employment and volunteer candidates for the purpose of obtaining information as to the existence and nature of any record of

child abuse investigations contained in the Child Abuse Central Index, state- or federal-level convictions, or state- or federal-level arrests for which the department establishes that the applicant was released on bail or on his or her own recognizance pending trial. Requests for federal-level criminal offender record information received by the department pursuant to this section shall be forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation by the department.

(b) When requesting state-level criminal offender record information pursuant to this section, the designated CASA program shall request subsequent arrest notification, pursuant to Section 11105.2 of the Penal Code, for all employment and volunteer candidates.

(c) The department shall respond to the designated CASA program with information as delineated in subdivision (p) of Section 11105 of the Penal Code.

(d) The department shall charge a fee sufficient to cover the cost of processing the requests for state- and federal-level criminal offender record information.

(e) For purposes of this section, a designated CASA program is a local court-appointed special advocate program that has adopted and adheres to the guidelines established by the Judicial Council and which has been designated by the local presiding juvenile court judge to recruit, screen, select, train, supervise, and support lay volunteers to be appointed by the court to help define the best interests of children in juvenile court dependency and wardship proceedings. For purposes of this section, there shall be only one designated CASA program in each California county.

(f) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2004.

SEC. 2. Section 11170 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

11170. (a) (1) The Department of Justice shall maintain an index of all reports of child abuse and severe neglect submitted pursuant to Section 11169. The index shall be continually updated by the department and shall not contain any reports that are determined to be unfounded. The department may adopt rules governing recordkeeping and reporting pursuant to this article.

(2) The department shall act only as a repository of reports of suspected child abuse and severe neglect to be maintained in the Child Abuse Central Index pursuant to paragraph (1). The submitting agencies are responsible for the accuracy, completeness, and retention of the reports described in this section. The department shall be responsible for ensuring that the Child Abuse Central Index accurately reflects the report it receives from the submitting agency.

(3) Information from an inconclusive or unsubstantiated report filed pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 11169 shall be deleted from the Child Abuse Central Index after 10 years if no subsequent report concerning the same suspected child abuser is received within that time period. If a subsequent report is received within that 10-year period, information from any prior report, as well as any subsequently filed report, shall be maintained

on the Child Abuse Central Index for a period of 10 years from the time the most recent report is received by the department.

(b) (1) The Department of Justice shall immediately notify an agency that submits a report pursuant to Section 11169, or a prosecutor who requests notification, of any information maintained pursuant to subdivision (a) that is relevant to the known or suspected instance of child abuse or severe neglect reported by the agency. The agency shall make that information available to the reporting medical practitioner, child custodian, guardian ad litem appointed under Section 326, or counsel appointed under Section 317 or 318 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or the appropriate licensing agency, if he or she is treating or investigating a case of known or suspected child abuse or severe neglect.

(2) When a report is made pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 11166, or Section 11166.05, the investigating agency, upon completion of the investigation or after there has been a final disposition in the matter, shall inform the person required or authorized to report, of the results of the investigation and of any action the agency is taking with regard to the child or family.

(3) The Department of Justice shall make available to a law enforcement agency, county welfare department, or county probation department that is conducting a child abuse investigation, relevant information contained in the index.

(4) The department shall make available to the State Department of Social Services or to any county licensing agency that has contracted with the state for the performance of licensing duties, information regarding a known or suspected child abuser maintained pursuant to this section and subdivision (a) of Section 11169 concerning any person who is an applicant for licensure or any adult who resides or is employed in the home of an applicant for licensure or who is an applicant for employment in a position having supervisory or disciplinary power over a child or children, or who will provide 24-hour care for a child or children in a residential home or facility, pursuant to Section 1522.1 or 1596.877 of the Health and Safety Code, or Section 8714, 8802, 8912, or 9000 of the Family Code.

(5) The Department of Justice shall make available to a Court Appointed Special Advocate program that is conducting a background investigation of an applicant seeking employment with the program or a volunteer position as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, as defined in Section 101 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, information contained in the index regarding known or suspected child abuse by the applicant.

(6) For purposes of child death review, the Department of Justice shall make available to the chairperson, or the chairperson's designee, for each county child death review team, or the State Child Death Review Council, information maintained in the Child Abuse Central Index pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 11170 relating to the death of one or more children and any prior child abuse or neglect investigation reports maintained involving the same victims, siblings, or suspects. Local child death review

teams may share any relevant information regarding case reviews involving child death with other child death review teams.

(7) The department shall make available to investigative agencies or probation officers, or court investigators acting pursuant to Section 1513 of the Probate Code, responsible for placing children or assessing the possible placement of children pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 300), Article 7 (commencing with Section 305), Article 10 (commencing with Section 360), or Article 14 (commencing with Section 601) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, Article 2 (commencing with Section 1510) or Article 3 (commencing with Section 1540) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 4 of the Probate Code, information regarding a known or suspected child abuser contained in the index concerning any adult residing in the home where the child may be placed, when this information is requested for purposes of ensuring that the placement is in the best interests of the child. Upon receipt of relevant information concerning child abuse or neglect investigation reports contained in the index from the Department of Justice pursuant to this subdivision, the agency or court investigator shall notify, in writing, the person listed in the Child Abuse Central Index that he or she is in the index. The notification shall include the name of the reporting agency and the date of the report.

(8) The Department of Justice shall make available to a government agency conducting a background investigation pursuant to Section 1031 of the Government Code of an applicant seeking employment as a peace officer, as defined in Section 830, information regarding a known or suspected child abuser maintained pursuant to this section concerning the applicant.

(9) (A) Persons or agencies, as specified in subdivision (b), if investigating a case of known or suspected child abuse or neglect, or the State Department of Social Services or any county licensing agency pursuant to paragraph (4), or a Court Appointed Special Advocate program conducting a background investigation for employment or volunteer candidates pursuant to paragraph (5), or an investigative agency, probation officer, or court investigator responsible for placing children or assessing the possible placement of children pursuant to paragraph (7), or a government agency conducting a background investigation of an applicant seeking employment as a peace officer pursuant to paragraph (8), to whom disclosure of any information maintained pursuant to subdivision (a) is authorized, are responsible for obtaining the original investigative report from the reporting agency, and for drawing independent conclusions regarding the quality of the evidence disclosed, and its sufficiency for making decisions regarding investigation, prosecution, licensing, placement of a child, employment or volunteer positions with a CASA program, or employment as a peace officer.

(B) If Child Abuse Central Index information is requested by an agency for the temporary placement of a child in an emergency situation pursuant to Article 7 (commencing with Section 305) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the department is exempt from the requirements of Section 1798.18 of the Civil Code if compliance

would cause a delay in providing an expedited response to the agency's inquiry and if further delay in placement may be detrimental to the child.

(10) (A) Whenever information contained in the Department of Justice files is furnished as the result of an application for employment or licensing pursuant to paragraph (4), (5), or (8), the Department of Justice may charge the person or entity making the request a fee. The fee shall not exceed the reasonable costs to the department of providing the information. The only increase shall be at a rate not to exceed the legislatively approved cost-of-living adjustment for the department. In no case shall the fee exceed fifteen dollars (\$15).

(B) All moneys received by the department pursuant to this section to process trustline applications for purposes of Chapter 3.35 (commencing with Section 1596.60) of Division 2 of the Health and Safety Code shall be deposited in a special account in the General Fund that is hereby established and named the Department of Justice Child Abuse Fund. Moneys in the fund shall be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for expenditure by the department to offset the costs incurred to process trustline automated child abuse or neglect system checks pursuant to this section.

(C) All moneys, other than that described in subparagraph (B), received by the department pursuant to this paragraph shall be deposited in a special account in the General Fund which is hereby created and named the Department of Justice Sexual Habitual Offender Fund. The funds shall be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for expenditure by the department to offset the costs incurred pursuant to Chapter 9.5 (commencing with Section 13885) and Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 13890) of Title 6 of Part 4, and the DNA and Forensic Identification Data Base and Data Bank Act of 1998 (Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 295) of Title 9 of Part 1), and for maintenance and improvements to the statewide Sexual Habitual Offender Program and the California DNA offender identification file (CAL-DNA) authorized by Chapter 9.5 (commencing with Section 13885) of Title 6 of Part 4 and the DNA and Forensic Identification Data Base and Data Bank Act of 1998 (Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 295) of Title 9 of Part 1).

(c) The Department of Justice shall make available to any agency responsible for placing children pursuant to Article 7 (commencing with Section 305) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, upon request, relevant information concerning child abuse or neglect reports contained in the index, when making a placement with a responsible relative pursuant to Sections 281.5, 305, and 361.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. Upon receipt of relevant information concerning child abuse or neglect reports contained in the index from the Department of Justice pursuant to this subdivision, the agency shall also notify in writing the person listed in the Child Abuse Central Index that he or she is in the index. The notification shall include the location of the original investigative report and the submitting agency. The notification shall be submitted to the person listed at the same time that all other parties are notified of the

information, and no later than the actual judicial proceeding that determines placement.

If Child Abuse Central Index information is requested by an agency for the placement of a child with a responsible relative in an emergency situation pursuant to Article 7 (commencing with Section 305) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, the department is exempt from the requirements of Section 1798.18 of the Civil Code if compliance would cause a delay in providing an expedited response to the child protective agency's inquiry and if further delay in placement may be detrimental to the child.

(d) The department shall make available any information maintained pursuant to subdivision (a) to out-of-state law enforcement agencies conducting investigations of known or suspected child abuse or neglect only when an agency makes the request for information in writing and on official letterhead, identifying the suspected abuser or victim by name. The request shall be signed by the department supervisor of the requesting law enforcement agency. The written requests shall cite the out-of-state statute or interstate compact provision that requires that the information contained within these reports shall be disclosed only to law enforcement, prosecutorial entities, or multidisciplinary investigative teams, and shall cite the criminal penalties for unlawful disclosure of any confidential information provided by the requesting state or the applicable interstate compact provision. In the absence of a specified out-of-state statute or interstate compact provision that requires that the information contained within these reports shall be disclosed only to law enforcement, prosecutorial entities, or multidisciplinary investigative teams, and criminal penalties equivalent to the penalties in California for unlawful disclosure, access shall be denied.

(e) (1) Any person may determine if he or she is listed in the Child Abuse Central Index by making a request in writing to the Department of Justice. The request shall be notarized and include the person's name, address, date of birth, and either a social security number or a California identification number. Upon receipt of a notarized request, the Department of Justice shall make available to the requesting person information identifying the date of the report and the submitting agency. The requesting person is responsible for obtaining the investigative report from the submitting agency pursuant to paragraph (11) of subdivision (b) of Section 11167.5.

(2) No person or agency shall require or request another person to furnish a copy of a record concerning himself or herself, or notification that a record concerning himself or herself exists or does not exist, pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subdivision.

(f) If a person is listed in the Child Abuse Central Index only as a victim of child abuse or neglect, and that person is 18 years of age or older, that person may have his or her name removed from the index by making a written request to the Department of Justice. The request shall be notarized

and include the person's name, address, social security number, and date of birth.

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